

GOVERNOR (1909-1916 : SPRY) [446]

PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE, 1905-1916; 1926-1933

0.4 cu. ft. and 1 reel microfilm

DESCRIPTION: This series contains letters written about personal matters and comments on current political issues from people who appear to be friends of Governor Spry. It covers the period when William Spry was appointed U.S. Marshall, the two terms he served as Governor of Utah (1909-1917), his years as U.S. Land Office Commissioner to his death in 1929, and the settlement of his estate. It includes materials on Spry's private business deals, political activity, and more personal matters such as a souvenir program from the gubernatorial ball and copies of poetry.

There are many expressions of congratulation on his appointment as Marshall, to the U.S. Land Office, and each time he was elected to a term as governor. Accounts of his personal business dealings are also common, particularly in regard to ranch land transactions and mining and oil claims. Spry was a major stockholder or on the board of directors for several companies, and there is correspondence pertaining to those issues throughout the series. The series also includes notes pertaining to personal financial matters including a squabble with his landlady and a bank's attempt to collect a remittance.

Requests for personal or political favors are also common. These include requests for business or character references, requests for political support or appointments, requests from missionaries for family financial support or from Ward leaders wanting opinions on the legality of out-of-state marriages, and requests for help in getting tickets to the launching of the Battleship Utah.

Letters from personal friends or fellow republicans offering inside information or opinions on Spry's official acts appear regularly. While still a governor-elect, Spry received an invitation to a White House governor's conference and a copy of President Theodore Roosevelt's

conservation program as outlined at an earlier conference. While governor, Spry received requests to make Joseph Smith's birthday a state holiday, to vote for or against legislative bills, to increase funding for the University of Utah, to support prohibition, to oppose railroad freight rates, to lend opposition to a heavyweight championship prize fight proposed in Ogden between Jim Jefferies and Jack Johnson, etc. Some letters did not pertain to any particular legislation but simply expressed opinions lamenting school teacher salaries, concern about crime rates, or worry that Spry was either giving in to Mormon pressures or that anti-Mormon attitudes were keeping Reed Smoot from being re-elected U.S. Senator.

Spry's travels around the country and around the state are noted regularly, particularly in telegrams to his secretary, John Hardy, noting his itinerary and telling him to let his children know. These trips were frequently a combination of pleasure and semi-official business. There are brief letters or telegrams pertaining to trips for the launching of the Battleship Utah and for the presentation of a silver service, to attend various fairs and expositions, to give public talks, to visit the Jewish farming community of Clarion, and to view irrigation and roads projects around the state. Many of these letters are from constituents or local Republican candidates wanting to provide a tour, fishing, etc. in an attempt to persuade the governor to view projects in their area favorably, to promote their campaign, or simply to maintain contact and a good image.

Spry remained active in Republican politics while governor and on into his years in the Land Office. Correspondence shows that he worked for Theodore Roosevelt's, William Howard Taft's, and Reed Smoot's elections. In fact, none of the letters from his term in the Land Office in the late 1920s relate to his land office duties. Rather they are strictly Spry's campaigning on behalf of the Republican party, consisting solely of correspondence between Spry and Reed Smoot.

Spry suffered a stroke in late 1927, and several letters and telegrams were sent inquiring about his health. He died in 1929 while still serving in the Land Office. There are telegrams, correspondence, and newspaper clippings pertaining to his death and funeral. Finally, there are papers pertaining to the settlement of his estate. In a letter of 1933, Reed Smoot returned unspecified correspondence for Spry's files.

ARRANGEMENT: The series is arranged chronologically.

RELATED RECORDS: Official communications about many of these same issues may be found in series 226, CORRESPONDENCE. Public speeches and addresses mentioned here appear in series 234, OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS AND ADDRESSES.

PROCESSING NOTE: These records were transferred to the Archives from the Office of the Governor in 1955. Microfilming of the correspondence occurred during 1992. Archival processing was completed during 1990 and 1992 by J. Brent Brinkerhoff and A.C. Cone.

CONTAINER LIST

Reel	Box	Folder	Description
1	1	1	1905-1906
1	1	2	1907-1908
1	1	3	1909, Jan. 18-Mar. 27
1	1	4	1909, Apr. 9-Dec. 9
1	1	5	1910, Jan. 10-Mar. 11
1	1	6	1910, Apr. 9-Dec. 30
1	1	7	1911, Jan. 6-June 26
1	1	8	1911, July 1-Dec. 6
1	1	9	1912, Jan. 1-May 31
1	1	10	1912, June 1-Oct. 30
1	1	11	1912, Nov. 2-Dec. 30
1	1	12	1915-1916
1	1	13	Undated, probably guberantorial period
1	1	14	1926
1	1	15	1927-1928
1	1	16	1929
1	1	17	1930; 1933